

October 21, 2004

Free Dental Sealant Clinic Scheduled for Children

Providing sealants to children is a preventive measure in an effort to avoid future tooth decay, says Kathy Ellis, director of Regence BlueShield of Idaho's Caring Foundation for Children.

The Caring Foundation, in partnership with South Central District Health, the College of Idaho Dental Assisting Program, and Twin Falls area volunteer dental hygienists, will be holding a clinic on Saturday, October 30, to provide uninsured children age 6 to 10 with dental sealants free of charge. The clinic will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the College of Southern Idaho's Dental Assisting Learning Lab.

Appointments are required and can be made by calling Susie Beem, Health Education Specialist at South Central District Health, 734-5900, ext. 246. Preference will be given to children ages 6 through 10 who have not had their molars sealed and do not have dental insurance. A sealant is a clear-shaded plastic material that is applied to the chewing surfaces of the back teeth, where decay occurs most often.

"Sealants are a simple and effective way to prevent the most common type of tooth decay in molar teeth," said Maggi Machala, Community Health Director for South Central District Health.

"By treating children early, we can help them avoid serious problems stemming from untreated oral disease, including school absenteeism, weight loss, speech impediments, poor self-esteem, and costly emergency room visits," said Ellis.

The Caring Foundation for Children is a Regence BlueShield of Idaho charity that provides low-income, uninsured children in Idaho with free preventive and restorative dental care. Participating dentists provide dental services to eligible children at reduced rates. The clinic is funded by a grant from KeyBank, through the Key Foundation. The Mustard Seed Ministries is also providing financial support.

For more information on the Caring Foundation's free dental insurance program, contact Kathy Ellis at 208-395-7741 or visit their web site at caringfoundationforchildren.org.

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